

Progress in flooding fight

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■ Pact between Mentor Schools, city will open door to long-sought project

It appears Mentor is about to get a big boost in its efforts to battle drainage woes.

A project decades in the making may come to fruition now that city and school officials have a proposed agreement that would allow for a detention basin to be built on school property.

The lease-purchase agreement, allowing the city to lease 14 acres behind Bellflower Elementary School for \$1, is on tonight's school board agenda.

The detention basin project is part of the city's comprehensive stormwater management plan and dates back at least as far as a 1991 watershed study, City Manager Ken Filipiak said.

"The record-breaking rains this year heightened the need for it," he said.

It is anticipated that the basin will be able to capture 80 percent of the water at the upstream end and as much as 35 percent at the downstream end, at the Mentor-

Willoughby border, Filipiak said.

"That's going to provide a lot of relief for anyone that has seen stormwater problems in that watershed," he said. "We think it's going to help with sanitary sewer backups as well by removing stormwater before it has a chance to get in the sanitary sewer system."

If approved by the school board, the agreement will go to City Council for a vote. It would

allow the city to renew the lease every 10 years. If school officials choose to sell the property at some point, the city has the first right of purchase.

Filipiak said the city already is pursuing options for grant funding to construct the basin, which would be designed with shallow slopes and about 10 acres of flat surface. The basin will be immediately adjacent to Two Town Ditch.

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"It could be used for general-purpose athletic fields by the city and schools," he said, noting that it will be wet only following heavy rains.

Two school board members and two council members worked with Filipiak on the agreement the past few months, after the city sought school leaders' help, schools Superintendent Jacqueline Hoynes said.

"When they approached us, we saw it as being a good community member," she said.

"Those people (in that area) are our parents, our families, our neighbors. ... We all depend on each other."

She added that the city agreed to maintain the basin and the athletic fields.